



Patuxent Science Meeting 2004 Poster Abstract

WeedUS Database: Invasive Plants Affecting Natural Areas in the United States of America

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Approximately 1,100 plant species reported to be invading natural areas in the U.S., including Hawaii, are documented in the WeedUS database (as of Oct. 2003). WeedUS may provide the most complete compilation of invasive plant species affecting natural ecosystems in the U.S. currently available. Data was collected from a wide variety of publications, reports, surveys, observations and expert opinions of botanists, ecologists, invasive species specialists, and other professionals. Sources (n=130) of species lists include the National Park Service (60 units), other federal agencies, state and local natural resource and related departments, Exotic Pest Plant Councils and sister organizations, The Nature Conservancy, and universities. Fields include genus; species; author; selected synonyms; common name; family; plant habit(s); native origin; U.S. nativity; states, national parks, and regions where reported invasive; federal noxious weed status; and source references. Some applications of the database include: 1) state-level distributional information for mapping occurrences of ecologically important invasive plants, 2) improved predictive abilities for potential spread, 3) improved invasive species prevention and management abilities, 4) baseline for national invasive plant ranking system, 5) identification of widespread to localized invaders, and 6) educational and research applications. Additional invasive plant species will be added to the database as they are identified and reported. The WeedUS database is posted in part to the Plant Conservation Alliance's Alien Plant Working Group "Weeds Gone Wild" web page at www.nps.gov/plants/alien.

Abstract: Approximately 1,100 plant species reported to be invading natural areas in the U.S., including Hawaii, are documented in the WeedUS database (as of Oct. 2003). WeedUS may provide the most current and comprehensive compilation of invasive plant species affecting natural ecosystems based on the observations and expert opinions of botanists, ecologists, invasive species specialists, and other professionals. This database has been compiled from a wide variety of publications, reports, surveys, and observations. Sources (n=130) of species lists include the National Park Service (59 units), other federal agencies, state and local natural resource and related departments, Exotic Pest Plant Councils and sister organizations, The Nature Conservancy, and universities. Fields include genus; species; author; synonyms (selected); common name; family; plant habit(s); native origin; U.S. nativity; states, national parks, and regions where reported invasive; federal noxious weed status; and references. Taxonomy follows Kartesz (1999). Some applications of the database include: 1) state-level distributional information for mapping occurrences of ecologically important invasive plants, 2) improved predictive abilities for potential spread, 3) improved invasive species prevention and management abilities, 4) baseline for national invasive plant ranking system, 5) identification of widespread to localized invaders, and 6) important education and research applications. Additional occurrences of invasive plant species will surely continue to be identified and reported and will be added to the database as received. The database is posted in part to the Plant Conservation Alliance's Alien Plant Working Group "Weeds Gone Wild" web page at www.nps.gov/plants/alien.